

State's High Schools Have Crowded Classes

From Education News Service
Improvements in class size in California high schools last year was barely perceptible, and more than a million students still were enrolled in academic classes with 36 or more pupils.

These conclusions were reported yesterday by Dr. Garford Gordon, California Teachers Association (CTA) research executive, in his annual report on high school class size, compiled in cooperation with the State Department of Education.

"Only in rare circumstances can students learn at near-optimum levels in high school classes with 36 or more pupils," Gordon said, noting that this condition exists in 32,409 California high school classes.

"When classes enroll 41 or more, as in 7,579 California classes, the classroom often becomes a baby-sitting service," he charged.

SINCE THE principal cause of oversized classes is the lack of adequate funds to hire ad-

ditional teachers or build additional classrooms, the CTA predicted that the problem will increase rather than diminish next year.

"The financial crisis already faced in low-wealth districts will force more class overloads unless the current Legislature appropriates funds to relieve the problem in these schools," Gordon said. He also pointed out that the defects of district bond and tax elections is bound to have similar effects.

Excluded from the study

were classes in commercial arts, music, industrial arts, vocational arts, and physical education. Also excluded were class sessions for which two or more individual class groups are assembled in the same room for joint lectures or demonstrations.

THE STUDY, which reported class size as of Oct., 1965, in 95.5 per cent of the state's school districts, should the average high school class size in California is 28.3, down .3 from the 1964 figure.

"This sounds encouraging until one calculates how many classes are still being operated over the 30 pupil level, the point beyond which teachers generally agree they can observe a deterioration in learning. Then we realize how many students are being short-changed educationally," Gordon said.

As in its report on elementary school class size, the CTA figures on high schools reveal an encouraging reduction of class size in some of

the largest cities.

A COMPARISON of the results of this latest report with a 1962-63 CTA study in the state's 100 largest districts shows that average high school class size in Los Angeles had dropped from 31.1 to 29.4; San Jose, 28 to 26.9; San Diego, 32.3 to 30.2; San Francisco, 32.3 to 30.7; Fresno, 31.1 to 28.3; Oakland, 32.1 to 28.7; and Long Beach, 32.5 to 30.6.

Los Angeles, with a total of 47,585 classes reported in

study, has 9,561 classes with from 36 to 40 pupils, 1,681 classes with from 41 to 45 pupils, and 3,352 classes with 46 or more pupils. San Diego, with a total of 6,290 classes, had 1,188 classes with 36-40 pupils, 102 with 41-45, and 70 with 46 or more. San Francisco, with a total of 4,549 classes, had 1,009 classes with 36-40; 77 with 41-45, and 2 with 46 or more. These figures show a distinct drop in the number of oversized classes in nearly every category.



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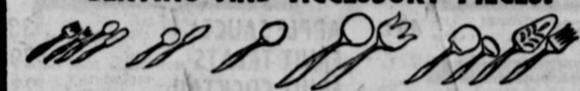
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